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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-JAPAN SECURITY MEETING, U.S.-TAIWAN
RELATIONS

11. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage May 5-7 on the first stage of the DPP presidential primary Sunday, in which former Premier Frank Hsieh emerged as the winner, defeating Premier Su Tseng-chang by a margin of 15,855 votes; on New York Yankees pitcher Wang Chien-ming, who nearly played a perfect game in New York Sunday; and on other local issues.

12. In terms of editorials and commentaries, several op-ed pieces and editorials continued to focus on the Two-plus-Two meeting between the United States and Japan. An op-ed in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" said the fact that cross-Straits issue was scrapped from the joint declaration following the Two-plus-Two meeting indicated that Washington and Tokyo wanted to send a clear message to President Chen Shui-bian, a pursuer of independence, that Taiwan independence has violated the security interests of the United States and Japan. An editorial in the pro-independence "Liberty Times," however, quoted U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and AIT Director Stephen Young as saying that the United States' cross-Straits policy remains unchanged. An op-ed in the pro-status quo "China Times" echoed the "Apple Daily" article and said neither Washington nor Tokyo wanted to send Taiwan the wrong message. A column in the pro-unification "United Daily News" also said it is a matter of course that Taiwan was not mentioned in the U.S.-Japan declaration because the United States has been questioning the Bian administration's cross-Straits policy for some time. With regard to the U.S. arms procurements, an editorial in the conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" urged the United States to have a little more patience over the case since "the necessary funds will be authorized as soon as the current political hassle and bustle in Taipei are over." End summary.

13. U.S.-Japan Security Meeting

A) "U.S.' and Japan's Signals to Taipei"

Xue Litai, research fellow at Stanford University's Center for International Security and Cooperation, opined in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 520,000] (5/7):

"... Given the analysis of the current situation, one can tell that both the United States and Japan have come to the same conclusion: namely, the actions taken in Taipei calling for independence have violated the security interests of the United States and Japan, and that it the Taiwan independence forces are to blame should any conflict break out across the Taiwan Strait. In that regard, the governments of the two countries have reflected on what they have come to understand in the adjustment of their policy, namely, they have removed the 'cross-Straits issue' from the original contents of their strategic objectives. Evidently, such a move by the United States and Japan was aimed at sending a clear and definite message to Chen Shui-bian, a pursuer of independence. ...

"Now that the United States is deeply caught in the anti-terror quagmire, there is really little it can do even if it wants to interfere militarily in conflicts across the Taiwan Strait. But to move to a deeper level, what if the United States acts the other way and starts to impose tremendous pressure on Taipei to force Taipei to back off from its eager pursuit of 'incremental Taiwan independence?' That way [Washington] can continue to maintain the status quo in the Taiwan Strait and continue to keep Taiwan without having the risks of engaging fully in a war, or even a nuclear war, with mainland China. This is a strategic plan that can achieve equal objectives at minimum cost, and it completely meets the United States' current interests. So why not adopt it? ..."

B) "Creating More Room for Taiwan's Development by Flexibly Using the International Environment that is Favorable for Taiwan"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 500,000] editorialized (5/5):

"The pro-unification media [in Taiwan] is making a fuss about this year's 'Two-plus-Two meeting' between the United States and Japan, and they claimed that such a move indicated that the U.S.-Japan security treaty may likely 'move from prevention of unification to stopping independence, a move to prevent Taiwan from changing all the time.' But U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stressed that the U.S. policy remains unchanged. As a matter of fact, the fact that Taiwan is included in the surrounding situation in the U.S.-Japan security treaty, and the 'Taiwan Relations Act' both remain intact. ... AIT Taipei Director Stephen Young also indicated that this is not the first time that Taiwan was not mentioned [in the U.S.-Japan security treaty,'] and that it is clear that the military and foreign relations in Northeast Asia are of joint concern for the United States and Japan. ...

"In other words, it is always the interests of big countries that dictate the operations of international politics. As Taiwan's

democracy deepens and its Taiwan-centered awareness strengthens, and given China's rise and its military expansion, more variables must be considered when relevant big countries are trying to manage cross-Strait issues. It is thus understandable when, in the face of a rapidly changing regional situation, these big powers adopt a strategically ambiguous attitude toward certain issues. But what's important is that we must stand in a firm position with regard to our sovereignty and flexibly use all the favorable elements in the international environment to seek the biggest bargaining chips and elbow room for Taiwan's development."

C) "Adjusting the Tactics, but Keeping the Strategy Unchanged"

Professor Philip Yang of National Taiwan University's Department of Political Science opined in the pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] (5/5):

"In the declaration following the Two-plus-Two security consultations between the foreign and defense ministers of both the United States and Japan, which was concluded on May 1, the statement about 'encouraging a peaceful resolution to issues related to the Taiwan Strait' was not included in the two countries' common strategic objectives, as was the case two years ago. Such a development has aroused the attention and different interpretations from both sides of the Taiwan Strait as well as other countries in East Asia. ...

"... The United States and Japan do not want to send the wrong message to people in Taiwan to trigger their misjudgment and misunderstanding about the Taiwan government's provocative moves against the status quo across the Taiwan Strait. Washington and Tokyo are concerned that if they clearly list cross-Strait security as their common strategic objective again, Taiwan will interpret it as an endorsement by the two countries and will thus take actions and measures to alter the status quo. ..."

D) "Two plus Two without Taiwan, a Matter of Course"

Journalist Sun Yang-ming noted in the "United Notes" column of the pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] (5/7):

"Totally opposite to the situation two years ago, cross-Strait issues are removed from the conclusion of the U.S.-Japan Two-plus-Two meeting. Heated discussions started immediately when people in Taiwan learned of this development. But in fact, it has been at least one-and-a-half years since Washington started to question, not support, or even oppose the cross-Strait policy and actions of the Bian administration....

"The United States' long-term cross-Strait strategy has been very clear: Namely, [Washington] will protect Taiwan depending on its own interests and will. In other words, for the United States to protect Taiwan, it has to be under the condition that the United States is able to control the entire situation. In this context, the United States must be in control when it wants or does not want to take any action. For Washington, the worst-case scenario is that it is dragged into a conflict passively. What the DPP is doing now is dragging the United States into such a quagmire. ..."

14. U.S.-Taiwan Relations

"On Buying U.S. Arms"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (5/7):

"Stephen Young, director of the American Institute in Taiwan, is again urging the Legislative Yuan to pass an arms purchase appropriation bill as soon as possible. He held a press conference last week, the second in 6 months, to repeat the call for early legislation that would enable Taiwan to acquire weapons and equipment to defend itself. ... We fully understand the American impatience. But people in Taiwan tend to regard Young's call as another ultimatum, although no 'or else' was uttered. The call came right after the United States and Japan had omitted mention of Taiwan as an issue of mutual concern in their two-plus-two ministerial conference in Washington. The omission might not be intended as a warning, but was considered so in Taipei. ...

"Of course, it's wrong on the part of the nation's highest legislative organ to tie up the reorganization of the Central Election Commission with the passage of the national budget bill which provides for part of the armament acquisition from the United States. The budget bill, as a matter of fact, should have been adopted by the end of last year. But we wish to remind the Americans of what has transpired in Taiwan over the past half dozen years. When President Bush ratified the deal, Taiwan was rich enough to buy all the weapons and equipment the United States would

sell. The country has since become increasingly poor. Now it can't afford all those expensive armaments, albeit the people are determined to defend themselves against attacks from China. On the other hand, rightly or wrongly, almost all lawmakers are convinced that China is unlikely to attack. So long as Taipei refrains from declaring independence, they have more than sufficient reason to believe, there will be no invasion from across the Taiwan Strait. A majority of Democratic Progressive Party lawmakers even regard china as a paper tiger who dares not invade, even if independence is declared, simply because there is a tacit assurance of American involvement in not-so-possible hostilities. We can't blame our legislators too harshly for not giving the arms purchase the priority it deserves. Will Uncle Sam have a little more patience? We are sure the necessary funds will be authorized as soon as the current political hassle and bustle in Taipei are over."

YOUNG